

***Commander Navy Region Southwest
(CNRSW)***



**PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES
GOVERNING THE CNRSW
REGIONAL HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM**

**Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5100.23 Series
(b) CNRSWINST 5100.11 Series**

1. Program Administration. In accordance with reference (a) OPNAV Instruction 5100.23 series, Navy Occupational Safety and Health (NAVOSH) Program Manual, all employees who are designated as working in a noise hazard area must be enrolled in the Hearing Conservation Program. These personnel must undergo initial evaluation (baseline testing), follow-up checks as directed by the medical officer, and annual audiometric exams. Personnel must also undergo annual Hearing Conservation training administered by the Site Safety Office Training Department. Personnel will be enrolled by the Site Safety Office utilizing workplace assessment and the NAVMEDCLINIC Industrial Hygienist annual workplace inspection.

If there are any questions, please contact your local Site Safety Office.

NOTE: AUTHORIZATION MUST BE OBTAINED FROM AN AUDIOLOGIST OR PHYSICIAN PRIOR TO ANY ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM.

2. Purpose. The goal of the Navy Hearing Conservation Program is to prevent occupational noise-related hearing loss. The Regional Safety Office Hearing Conservation Program includes the following elements:

a. Work environments shall be surveyed to identify potentially hazardous noise levels and personnel at risk.

b. Environments containing, or equipment producing hazardous noise should, when technologically and economically feasible, be modified to reduce noise to acceptable levels. Where engineering controls are not feasible, administrative controls or the use of hearing protective devices shall be employed.

c. Periodic hearing testing shall be conducted to monitor the effectiveness of the Hearing Conservation Program. Early detection of temporary threshold shifts allows further protective action to be taken before permanent hearing loss occurs. In accordance with reference (b), personnel exhibiting a significant threshold shift will be informed in writing within 21 days.

d. Education is vital to overall success of a hearing conservation program. An understanding of the permanent nature of noise-induced hearing loss, the Regional Safety Office Hearing Conservation Program and the individuals own responsibilities must be achieved. Employees shall be encouraged to separately obtain their own non-government hearing protective devices to use when they are exposed to hazardous noise levels during off-duty activities e.g., from lawn mowers, chain saws, firearms, etc.

e. All personnel shall receive a baseline-hearing test prior to being assigned duty in a noise hazardous environment. Hearing tests shall be conducted annually or as needed thereafter for as long as the employee remains in a noise hazardous environment.

f. Military personnel shall receive a hearing test upon termination of Navy service. Civilian personnel who have been routinely exposed to hazardous noise or have previously demonstrated a significant threshold shift, shall receive a hearing test upon termination of employment. Additionally, all personnel dropped from the hearing testing program due to removal from hazardous noise duties will have a termination test to document auditory status at the time of reassignment.

3. Policy. All personnel who work in noise-hazardous areas or operations, and all visitors entering these noise-hazardous

areas, shall be provided adequate hearing protection equipment at government expense by each customer activity.

4. Noise Measurements. To effectively control noise, it is necessary that the noise levels are accurately measured according to standard procedures and the measurements are properly evaluated against accepted criteria. This will normally be done by the cognizant industrial hygienists in conjunction with assistance from the Site Safety Office.

5. Labeling of Hazardous Noise Areas and Equipment. Designated hazardous noise areas and equipment that produce sound levels greater than 84dB(A), or 140dB peak sound pressure level, shall be appropriately labeled in accordance with reference (a).

a. Posting an entire building, as a hazardous noise environment is not recommended, unless all areas within the building are designated hazardous noise areas.

b. Military combatant equipment is excluded from this requirement.

6. Personal Hearing Protective Devices.

a. All personnel shall wear hearing protective devices when they enter or work in an area where operations generate noise levels:

(1) Greater than 84dB(A) sound level, or

(2) 140dB peak sound pressure level or greater.

b. A combination of insert type and circumaural (earmuff) type hearing protective devices (double protection) shall be worn in all areas where noise levels exceed 104dB(A).

c. All personnel exposed to gunfire in a training situation, or to artillery or missile firing, under any circumstances, shall wear hearing protective devices.

d. Determination of hearing protective device or combination of devices suitable for use in each situation is the responsibility of cognizant industrial hygienists and Regional Safety Office professionals. Every effort shall be made to issue personal hearing protective devices suited to the task. Personal hearing protective devices shall reduce effective sound levels to less than 84dB(A) or 140dB peak. Appendix 18-A of

reference(a) lists recommended devices available through the navy supply system. The Navy Environmental Health Center (NAVENVIRHLTHCEN) website at <http://www.nehc.med.navy.mil> identifies additional hearing protectors that have been tested by DoD activities and are approved for open purchase. Activities desiring to use hearing protective devices not specified in Appendix 18-A of reference (a) or cited by NAVENVIRHLTHCEN shall submit a sample of the device with a request for evaluation to the Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED).

e. In case hearing protective devices do not provide sufficient attenuation to reduce an employee's effective exposure level below 84dB(A), administrative controls of exposure time will be necessary.

7. Training. Personnel identified for inclusion in the hearing conservation program, their supervisors, and employee representatives shall receive a thorough initial briefing from qualified Naval Medical Clinic personnel or Regional Safety Office training specialists concerning requirements of the program prior to being assigned to a noise hazardous environment, and refresher training, as needed. Records of training shall be made a part of the individual's OSH training records.

8. Responsibilities.

a. Supervisors shall:

(1) Ensure that all personnel (including visitors) exposed to noise hazards wear approved hearing protective devices. Appendix 18-A of reference (a) lists recommended hearing protective devices available through the navy supply system. The Navy Environmental Health Center (NAVENVIRHLTHCEN) website at <http://www.nehc.med.navy.mil> identifies additional hearing protectors that have been tested by DoD activities and are approved for open purchase.

(2) Ensure that all hearing protective devices are maintained in a clean and fully operational condition.

(3) Schedule, attend and ensure personnel attend required annual hearing examinations and annual and refresher hearing conservation training prior to being assigned in a noise hazardous environment.

(4) Ensure all personnel required to wear personal hearing protection are trained in the use and maintenance of that protective equipment, regardless of whether they require enrollment into the hearing conservation program.

(5) Provide a current roster of all personnel required to be enrolled into the Hearing Conservation Program, based on the current Industrial Hygiene survey and Hazard Assessments as required by reference (a).

b. Personnel shall:

(1) Wear the required hearing protective devices when entering or working in noise hazard areas or engaged in noise hazard operations.

(2) Maintain hearing protective devices in a clean and fully operational condition.

(3) Report for required annual hearing examinations, when scheduled.

(4) Attend required hearing conservation training, when scheduled prior to being assigned to a noise hazardous environment.

c. Site Safety Office shall:

(1) Conduct a survey of all work areas, processes, and occupations to determine which have hazardous noise environments and which personnel require hearing protection and whether other personnel in the workplace vicinity also require hearing protective devices.

(2) Identified requirements of areas, processes, and occupations that require hearing protective devices shall be documented as part of the Workplace Hazard Assessments.

(3) Provide hearing conservation training and education for personnel prior to being assigned to a noise hazardous environment.

(4) Request an update of the roster of personnel placed in the Hearing Conservation program based on the current Industrial Hygiene survey and Hazard Assessments on a semi-annual basis as required by reference (a).

HEARING CONSERVATION

